

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-732

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Meredith & Meredith, Inc.
other

2. Location

street and number 2343 Farm Creek Road not for publication
city, town Toddville x vicinity
county Dorchester

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name J. C. and Morgan Tolley
street and number Meredith & Meredith, Inc. 2343 Farm Creek Road telephone 410-397-8151
city, town Toddville state Maryland zip code 21672

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber 234 folio 854
city, town Cambridge tax map 102 tax parcel 216 tax ID number 10-007054

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense		<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic		<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education		<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	1	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

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Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Meredith & Meredith Seafood Company packinghouse is located near the mouth of Farm Creek, a tributary of Fishing Bay, in the vicinity of Toddville, Dorchester County, Maryland. The concrete block and frame facility stands between Farm Creek Road and the western edge of the creek. The combination one and two-story structure is stretched out along the edge of Farm Creek with a bulkheaded dock backfilled with oyster shells.

Built in stages between 1920 and 1986, the composite concrete block and frame packinghouse has at its core a fragment of a single-story frame packinghouse that has been engulfed and largely obscured by additions. The original frame packinghouse is exposed on the east side facing the creek. Another early part of the packinghouse is a shucking room that retains a series of stalls for shucking oysters. Now used as a storage room, the shucking room partly extends over the creek and part of it is located on the bank. The roof of the former shucking room has been raised.

The west elevation of the part concrete block and part frame packinghouse, facing Farm Creek Road, is a long asymmetrical façade combining one- and two-story concrete block sections covered with flat roofs. The concrete block building is lighted by a combination of metal casement or metal jalousie windows fitted in openings with brick sills. The former company office, which occupied the second floor space, retains casement style windows, whereas the first floor casements have been replaced with jalousie style windows. The west elevation is an asymmetrical façade with a variety of door and window openings piercing various sections. The two-story sections with lateral single-story wings houses the main picking and packing rooms as well as the space for the steam room and several coolers. At the south end of the main building is a single-story concrete block addition that houses the break room, which was erected in 1970. A new company office, housed in a single-story frame addition, was built at the south end of the structure in 1986.

The east elevation of the packinghouse is oriented to Farm Creek, and it is a composite one- and two-story elevation of frame walls that constitute the remnants of the original structure. A second floor, one-room plan office, sheathed with corrugated metal siding, formerly housed a night watchman during the crab shedding season. The creek side is edged with a bulkhead and concrete floored dock. The early frame packinghouse is sheathed with T-111 and the low pitched gable roof is covered with tar paper.

The interior of the early section of the frame packinghouse is partially visible with an exposed king-post truss with lateral diagonal braces. Several wall sections of vertical boards or horizontal weatherboarding remain exposed as well as a sliding board door. A small closet, formerly an office, is located next to the sliding board door, and it is entered through an opening that retains an early twentieth-century partially glazed door. An interior hall that connects the steam room, packing room, and picking room survives with an early twentieth-century beaded board cupboard and a set of shelves as well as a swivel type armchair. The ceiling of the early interior is covered with a type of painted board with narrow strips covering the gaps.

The interiors of the concrete walled sections built in the 1960s are painted in a two-tone scheme, and the ceilings are largely open with steel I-beams supporting ceiling joists stabilized by cross bracing. The steam room as well as the picking room have exposed joist ceilings.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates 1920

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register☐ Maryland Register☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Meredith & Meredith occupies a composite frame and concrete block packinghouse situated on the edge of Farm Creek, one of two packinghouses at this location. Engulfed by later masonry additions, the initial frame packinghouse dates around 1920, and it survives as one of the oldest seafood related buildings in southern Dorchester County. The single-story gable roofed frame packinghouse was erected on pilings over the water and over time has been underpinned with concrete flooring atop oyster shell fill. During the mid to late twentieth century concrete block and frame additions were erected around the initial packinghouse structure, which substantially increased the size of the facility. The accretive process of enlarging a facility according to need is common to packinghouse construction in general.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Cousins Ronald Meredith and Oswald Meredith established Meredith & Meredith Seafood in 1919 in Toddville, Maryland, packing crabmeat under the name "Meredith's."¹ The original building was a frame structure built on pilings and later surrounded by concrete block additions erected during the early to mid 1960s. Over the years oyster shells filled in around and under the building with a partial poured concrete floor laid in 1966.²

Oswald Meredith died in 1946 and nephews Jennings Todd and Calvert Tolley were brought into the business. This was also the year that electricity became available. Jennings Todd worked in the partnership from 1946 until 1949 when he was bought out by Armon Todd and left to establish Todd Seafood in Cambridge. Hurricane Hazel tore up their docks in 1954 when water rose 18 inches inside the buildings. Roland retired in 1956 and sold his interest to the remaining partners Calvert and Armon Todd. When Armon died in 1959, Calvert Tolley owned the entire business. The company purchased cake ice from the Crystal Ice plant in Cambridge and ground it themselves until the late 1950s when it became more economical to install their own ice machine. They added a freezer for soft crabs and frozen bait, including chicken necks and bull lips, that they sold to watermen.

¹ Student paper by Morgan B. Tolley, Salisbury University, Nabb Research Center.

² Conversation with J. C. Tolley, December 14, 2001, Toddville, Maryland.

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Name Meredith & Meredith, Inc.
Continuation Sheet

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The 1960-61 oyster season was terrible with several hard freezes shutting down the Maryland oyster fishery. Calvert Tolley supported an attempt by Dorchester County seafood workers to form a protective organization.³ With no oysters to process Meredith & Meredith began purchasing crabs in Virginia to process in their Toddville plant. In 1962, when the Elliott Brothers Seafood Company burned down on Elliott's Island, many of the crabpickers came to work for Meredith & Meredith in a World War II surplus landing barge. The crossing was sometimes too rough for the pickers so that form of transport had to be abandoned.⁴ Calvert's son Jennings C. Tolley began working for the company in 1963. In 1965, the company employed 90 people processing crabmeat, fish, oysters, and soft and hard crabs.⁵

The company incorporated in 1970 with Calvert Tolley as President and his sons Jennings C. Tolley vice-president and Andrew Tolley secretary-treasurer. This was the year that they were able to install flush toilets at the company.⁶ The company acquired the adjacent William C. Dean Seafood Company from Bernard P. Murphy in 1972 after it burned down and was rebuilt. Andrew Tolley became the manager of the new subsidiary renamed Toddville Seafoods, Inc. In 1977 Meredith & Meredith employed 80 people (30 men and 50 women) processing fresh and pasteurized crabmeat, fresh oysters, fresh and frozen fish and soft crabs, and live hard crabs.⁷ When Calvert Tolley retired in 1987, J. C. Tolley became president of the company. Andrew Tolley left the business in 1996 and J. C. Tolley's son Morgan became vice-president.

Meredith & Meredith stopped shucking oysters in 1985. Local oysters were expensive, scarce, and full of mussels and the company could no longer make a profit. They did continue to sell oysters in the shell. The current office was added in 1987 and the second floor office location was abandoned.

Crabs kept this company in business. Crabs are picked by hand and also by a Quik Pik machine that the Tolleys helped design and manufacture.⁸ The machine was installed in the Toddville Seafood building. Meredith's crabmeat won the Best Crab Cake in Maryland contest three years in a row in the early 1990s. The company stopped using the Quik Pik machine in 1998 when machine-picked crabmeat

³ "Seafood Workers, Hit Hard By Poor Season, Organize Group," *Cambridge Daily Banner*, February 10, 1961, p. 1

⁴ A. M. Foley and Freddie T. Waller, *Elliott's Island: The Land That Time Forgot*, Dogwood Ridge Books, Elliott Island, Maryland: 1999, p. 115.

⁵ *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1965-1966*, Maryland Department of Economic Development, p. 235.

⁶ Conversation with J. C. Tolley, December 14, 2001, Toddville, Maryland.

⁷ *Directory of the Maryland Manufacturers 1977-1978*, Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, p. 168.

⁸ Mary Pemberton, "Seafood Packing Plants on the Eastern Shore Face Mounting Obstacles," Associated Press, January 28, 1998. [<http://www.stardem.com/locals/news/seafood/sfpackingplants.html>]

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could no longer compete with imported crabmeat.

J. C. (Jennings) Tolley, was president in 2000, and the company continues to pack hard and soft crabs, crabmeat, oysters, and fish.⁹ Toddville Seafoods, Inc. is no longer operating as a subsidiary company. The company employed 50 people and was one of the few packinghouses in Dorchester County that did not participate in the Federal H-2B guest worker program recruiting Mexican migrant labor. The company has been able to maintain its local workforce because other companies have closed. They operate vans for their pickers from Cambridge Liner's Road. The company sells their seafood directly to retail stores and restaurants with some wholesale business, primarily in Maryland and Pennsylvania. They have had the same customers for many years and do not advertise.¹⁰

⁹ 2000 Maryland/DC Manufacturers Directory, p. 368.

¹⁰ Conversation with J. C. Tolley, December 14, 2001, Toddville, Maryland.

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Meredith & Meredith
2343 Farm Market Road
Toddville, Dorchester County, Maryland

Map 102, Parcel 216

234/854

Meredith & Meredith, Inc.
and Calvert B. Tolley

to

4/11/1985

Calvert B. Tolley

1. from Stella J. Dean unto Meredith & Meredith, Inc.
9/20/1977, PLC 202/158
2. from Charles E. Edmundson, trustee to Calvert B. Tolley,
3/16/1962, PLC 127/207

PLC 127/207

Charles E. Edmundson, trustee

to

3/16/1962

Calvert B. Tolley

all that real and personal property heretofore owned and possessed first
by Roland S. Meredith, Calvert B. Tolley, and Armon R. Todd,
co-partners trading as "Meredith & Meredith" and then by Calvert B.
Tolley and Armon R. Todd, also as co-partners trading as "Meredith &
Meredith"

Lot No. 1 all that lot or parcel of land which was conveyed to Oswald
B. Meredith and Roland S. Meredith by William F. Jones and wife,
1/6/1922, JFD 11/231, less than one acre of land...the interest of the said
Oswald B. Meredith in and to the tract of land was conveyed unto the said
Roland S. Meredith from Victoria F. Meredith, et al 11/22/1946,
RSM 60/677

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Lot No. 2 all that lot or parcel of land which was conveyed to the said
Oswald B. Meredith and Roland S. Meredith by William F. Jones and
Grace Jones, 6/11/1932, JFD 28/625

JFD 11/231

William F. Jones and Grace Jones

to

1/6/1922

Oswald B. Meredith
½ interests each one acre on creek

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.

(For a full listing of the resources see footnotes)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1 acre
Acreage of historical setting 1 acre
Quadrangle name Wingate, Maryland

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian and Virginia Jenkins, Business Historian		
organization	Private Consultants	date	12/14/2001
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

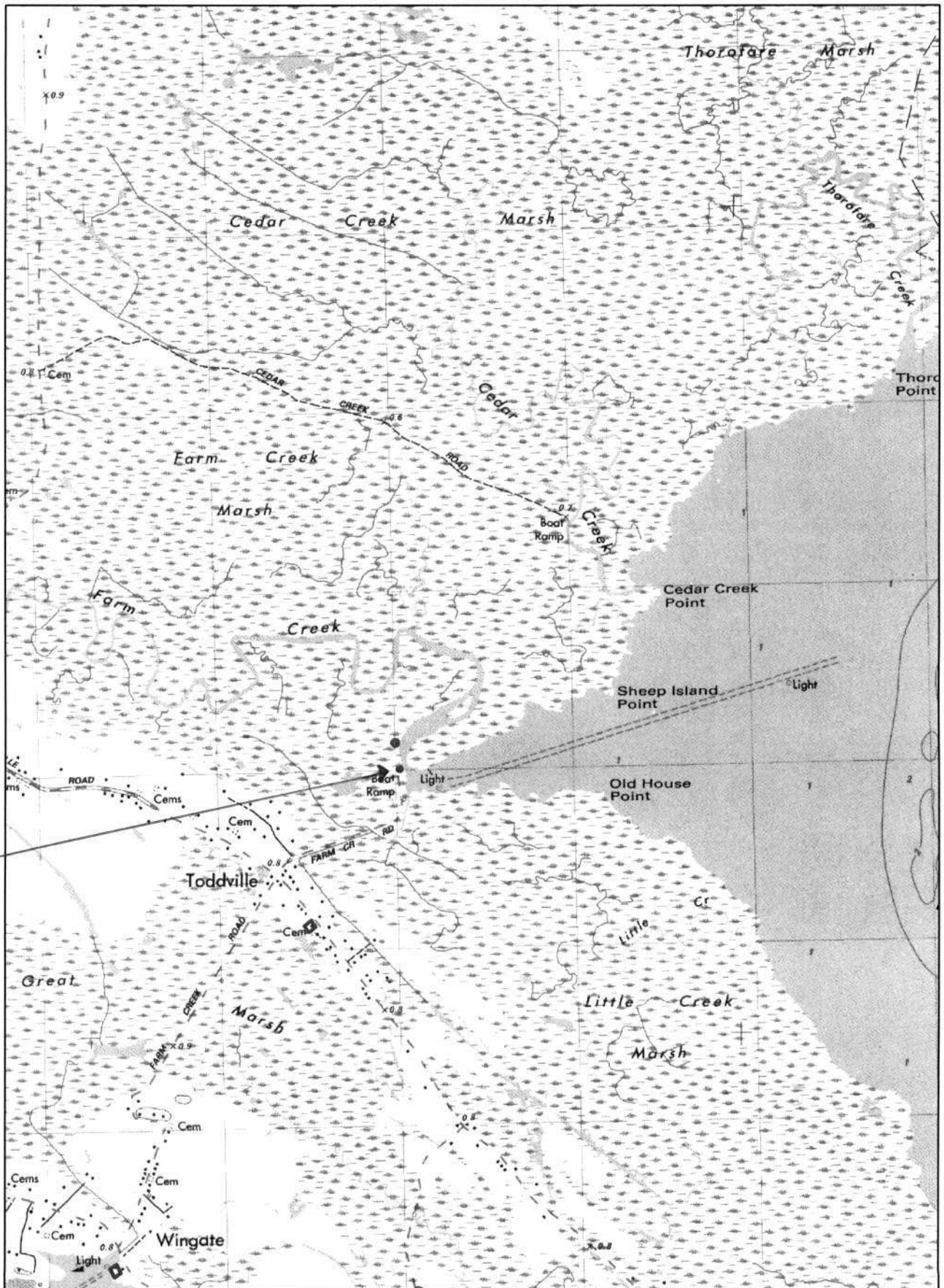
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

D-732
Meredith & Meredith
Toddville vicinity
Wingate Quadrangle

D-732





D-732

MENENITA P MENENITA

TORRVILLE VIC, DORCHESTER CO, MD.

WEST ELEVATION

12/2001, PAUL TOWANT, PHOTOGRAPHED

NET. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

1 04 16



D-732

MENHITT & MENHITT

TODDVILLE VIC., DORCHESTER CO., MD.

WEST ENTRANCE

12/2001, PAUL TONAGH, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEA./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

2 OF 16



D-732

MENEDITH & MENEDITH

TODDVILLE VIC., DORCHESTER CO., MD.

SOUTH ELEVATION

12/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG./AND. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

Menenita & Menenita

TODDVILLE. VIC., DORCHESTER CO., MD.

SOUTH ELEVATION

12/2001, PAUL TOWHART, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEZ. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

MENEVITA & MENEVITA

TOORVILLE VIC., DORSET ESTER C., NED.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

12/2001, PAUL TOUANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

NED./AID. HISTORICAL TRUST

5 or 16



D-732

MENEMITH & MENEMITH

TOONVILLE VIC, DORCHESTER CO., MD.

OYSTER SHUCKING STALLS

12/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEZ./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

Menenitit & Menenitit

Tonnaville vic., Dorchester Co., ME

Oyster stacking room

12/200, Paul Touret, photo.

NEZ./M.D. Historical Trust

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D-732

MENEMITA & MENEMITAS

Tonoville vic., Dorchester Co., Md.

Packing Room

12/2001, Paul Touant, Pitotville
N.E. / Md. Historical Trust

8 or 16



D-732

MERMITT & MERMITT
TOWNVILLE VIC, DORCHESTER CO., MD.
PASSAGE

12/2001, PAUL TOWNT, PITUITARY
NEB / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

MEXWORTH P. MEXWORTH
TOWNVILLE VIC., DORCHESTER CO., MA
CUPBOARDS, SHELVES AND CHAIR
IN PASSAGE

12/2001, PAUL TOWANT, PHOTO.

NEH-1 M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

MERENITH & MERENITH

TOWNVILLE VIC., DORCHESTER G. MD.
CLOSET WITH EXPOSED WEATHER-
BOARDING

12/2001, PAUL TOWANT, PHOTO.

N.H. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

MENENINT & MERENINT

TOWNVILLE VIC., DORCHESTER Co., MD.

RETREAT ROOM

12/2001, PAUL TONANT, PITTSBURGH

MAR. / APR. HISTORICAL TRUST

12 04 16



D-732

MENEMITH & MEREDITH

TODDVILLE VIC., DORCHESTER C., MD.

LAST SURVIVING EXPOSED TRUSS FROM
ORIGINAL C. 1920 BUILDING

12/2001, PAUL TOWNST, PITTSBOROUGH
NEB./MD (HISTORICAL TRUST)

13 or 16



D-732

MERENITH & MERENITH
TOWNVILLE VIC., DORCHESTER C., MD
SLIDING DOOR FROM C. 1920 BUILDING,
12/2001, PAUL TOWNANT, PHOTOGRAPHER
NEG/MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

MERENITH & MERENITH

TODDVILLE VIC, DOCKHETER CO. MD.

PICKING ROOM

12/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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D-732

MENOWITH & MENOWITH

Toppville vic, Dorchester Co., MD.

Cooling room

12/2001, Paul Touart, photographer

NEG./MD Historical Trust

16 OK 16